

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

ANTHROPOLOGY

Kluckhohn, Clyde. *Mirror for Man.*
London, 1950. George G. Harrap
& Co. Ltd. Pp. 288. Price 12s. 6d.

WHILST superficially at least there appears such a bewildering variety of opinions amongst anthropologists themselves regarding most of the subjects that form the major themes of modern anthropological discussion, it is no easy task to present for the layman a comprehensible survey of the subject in its relation to modern life. This eminently readable and interesting book from the pen of Professor Kluckhohn achieves considerable success in tackling this difficult problem. Undoubtedly there is a hard core of generally accepted fact and concept underlying the diversity of professional opinion, and it is on this consensus of the profession that Kluckhohn has concentrated his attention.

The activities of anthropologists have attracted more and more popular attention during the last couple of decades. As Professor Kluckhohn remarks in the opening chapter of this new work, "the word 'anthropology' and some of its terms have come out of hiding in recondite literature to appear with increasing frequency in *The New Yorker*, *Life*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, detective stories, and even in films." A recent radio play, broadcast in this country, had a "professor of anthropology" as one of its leading characters! A number of professional anthropologists, returning from the field, have found a profitable outlet for their literary abilities in journalism and broadcasting, and so have substantially contributed to the increasing popularity of their subject among non-anthropologists. It is not unnatural then that laymen should wonder what exactly the aims and methods of anthropology are, and what (if any) contributions it can make to the understanding and resolution of the vital problems that have risen to prominence in the world to-day.

In a brief Preface, intended perhaps to

disarm criticism, Kluckhohn points out that "this book is intended for the layman, not for the carping professional." Yet such a book, likely to be widely read by the general public and purporting to speak authoritatively to the layman, must necessarily arouse interest and even concern among professional anthropologists. There seems much cause for concern in the manner in which Kluckhohn has presented some of his material. In his Preface he states explicitly that "where I have expressed heterodox or personal opinions, the phrasing gives some warning to the reader. Similarly, by the use of such words as 'some authorities say,' 'perhaps,' 'probably' and 'maybe,' I have indicated my tentative choice between controversial findings or interpretations."

A twenty-eight page chapter, however, entitled "Personality in Culture (The Individual and the Group)," which discusses the psychosociological theory of personality formation including the nexus between child-rearing techniques and the adult personality configurations in various cultures, apparently contains none of these words. By implication, therefore, the reader would be led to infer that this theory of personality as such forms part of the "consensus of the profession." Kluckhohn's own competence in this field is of course undisputed, yet the fact remains that the whole question of personality studies is distinctly controversial. The evidence is by no means as "solid" or the theories as generally accepted (certainly not by European anthropologists) as Kluckhohn's chapter suggests to the layman.

The first chapter, entitled: "Queer Customs, Potsherds and Skulls," is in the nature of an introduction. It includes a very brief survey of the history of the subject, and a more detailed discussion of why anthropologists tend to concentrate their efforts on primitive society, leading to the conclusion (in italics) that "Anthropology holds up a great mirror to man and lets him look at himself in his infinite variety." The following three chapters are devoted to a presentation of the concept of culture and

cultural relativity, historical anthropology (including archaeology, ethnology and historical linguistics), and physical anthropology respectively. In each case, the emphasis is on the practical values of the conclusions anthropology is able to offer, and hence on the social justification of the subject as a whole. Physical anthropology for example, is discussed with regard to the "immediate practical utility" of the rigorous and standardized techniques of measurement developed by the physical anthropologists. Kluckhohn's examples are somewhat surprising. We are told that the first applications of physical anthropology were in the field of "military anthropology," and particularly with regard to problems of procurement. "How many overcoats of size forty-two will be needed among a million men drafted from the North-East Central States? Given certain ranges of distribution in a carefully selected sample measured by standardized techniques, it is possible to make predictions that are far better than guesses based on an unsystematic evaluation of previous experience."

Two further chapters entitled: "Race: A Modern Myth" and "The Gift of Tongues," are sound, clear and excellent analyses of racial and linguistic diversity and are perhaps the best chapters in the book. The social importance of race differences, as opposed to the biological, are well brought out, and Kluckhohn's able analysis of race prejudice and attitudes should prove salutary and deserves a wide audience.

The remaining chapters are less useful, and could no doubt be greatly improved if Kluckhohn had avoided the vagueness that must attend such a broad survey for a more detailed consideration of particular examples. For example, the chapter entitled "Anthropologists at Work" leaves a very hazy impression of what an anthropologist does in the field, and of what particular problems he is competent by virtue of his specialist knowledge to study. Far too much space is allotted to what official posts anthropologists held during the war, and far too little to what kind of help an anthropologist can give an administrator in colonial develop-

ment. The presentation would have benefited had Kluckhohn selected a recent study in a colonial situation and analysed it in some detail so as to bring out not only how anthropologists work but also the extent to which the results obtained can be applied to the solution of a particular problem.

The same general criticism can be applied to a later chapter in which Kluckhohn attempts, as an anthropologist, to look at the United States. Here the canvas is so enormous, that Kluckhohn, though ostensibly speaking *ex cathedra*, in fact succeeds only in reducing anthropology to a mere journalistic impressionism. Where he might easily have concentrated his attention on the studies undertaken by Lloyd Warner and the Lynds, from whose works he could have illustrated with clarity the points he is trying to make, he is content with broad facile generalizations that attempt to take in the whole complex American scene. Such generalizations can only serve to discredit anthropology in the eyes of the layman since they are so obviously little more than a mixture of common sense and platitude, garnished with technical jargon.

There is a useful appendix in which "the branches of anthropology and the relation of anthropology to other studies of Man" are discussed, though it is difficult to visualize clearly from the presentation what exactly Kluckhohn conceives to be the relation between anthropology and the natural sciences on the one hand, and the humanities on the other. It is clear, however, that most European anthropologists, albeit "carping professionals," would not accept Kluckhohn's conception of the inter-disciplinary relationships without considerable modification.

Essentially this is a book written by an American anthropologist with an American audience in mind, and it would need to be considerably re-written were it to have an equal appeal for readers in this country. It is certainly readable if, in his efforts to be comprehensible, Kluckhohn has been unable at times to avoid over-simplification and a somewhat patronizing tone. In his chapter on the United States, Kluckhohn points out that one of the main features of American

culture is the "worship of success." The recurrent theme that dominates this book seems to be the idea that in dealing with current social problems anthropology has been, and can be, a practical success. In almost every chapter Kluckhohn has gone to great lengths to drive this point home. The overall result is, in the opinion of the reviewer, singularly unconvincing.

COLIN ROSSER.

Mead, Margaret. *Male and Female.*
London, 1950. Gollancz. Pp. 304.
Price 18s.

DR. MEAD'S book falls into two parts. The first, an analysis of observed differences between the human sexes, is based on a study of seven Pacific cultures made by Dr. Mead herself. Ethical and value judgments are here scanty. The second part consists of a discussion of contemporary American culture which is assessed, albeit implicitly, in terms of a standard of values.

In the author's seven cultures, diverse relations between the sexes are found. The ways in which the peoples here described "pattern the relation between the sexes," should, the author thinks, give us "some greater appreciation of the value for human civilisation of the presence of the two sexes, of the importance of this counterpoint that we sometimes ignore grievously, often distort, and have never used to the full."

In a chapter entitled "Sex and Temperament," Dr. Mead poses the question: Can we, following some absolute standard, regard some qualities as inherently "more male" than others and hence imagine an ideal man or "norm" of maleness possessing all such qualities in their most eminent degree? If yes, we can look upon individual men and diverse cultural stereotypes of men as departing in greater or lesser degree from this norm. But is there, she asks, only one norm of maleness? By Western standards the Balinese man looks "feminine" and the Balinese woman "boyish." Does this approximation mean that the Balinese man is less

"male" and the Balinese woman less "female," or simply that the Balinese type of masculinity and femininity is different—in other words, that there are differences in kind as well as differences in degree?

Dr. Mead suggests that we should recognise several different constitutional categories of masculinity and corresponding femininity, within each of which differences in degree may be discerned. Such a situation would complicate assessments of *degrees* of maleness and femaleness. A "fiery initiating woman" may look like a lion if compared with a rabbitty man; but if contrasted with a fiery initiating man of her own type will look, not like a lion, but like a lioness in her proper setting.

"Just as one would not be able to identify the sex of a male rabbit by comparing its behaviour with that of a lion, a stag, or a peacock as well as by comparing rabbit buck with doe, lion with lioness, stag with doe, and peacock with peahen—so it may well be that if we could disabuse our minds of the habits of lumping all males together and all females together and worrying about the beards of one and the breasts of another, and look instead for males and females of different types, we would present to children a much more intelligible problem."

Each society will tend to select and idealize one particular type of masculinity and femininity, which may not necessarily "correspond" with each other. We may indeed expect to find the lion lying down with the lamb if society happens to select for its ideals lion-like males and lamb-like females. But every accepted "stereotype" is narrow, and may lead to the waste of valuable talent if people dare not use their particular gifts for fear of being unsexed. We should instead, Dr. Mead suggests, "take the primary fact of sex membership as a cross-constitutional classification" without allowing it to obscure the essential characteristics of the various categories of male and female.

Interesting possibilities for marriage guidance are disclosed by this suggestion. A society may be imagined as recognizing several types of categories of male or female.